

DIRECT OR PERSONAL

Q. Admiral Rabern, why did you accept appointment as Director of Central Intelligence, and then resign after only fourteen months in that post?

A. I accepted appointment because the President asked me to take the position. At the time, the President told me I could remain at the job as long as he was President or until such time as I felt that a well-prepared successor was available to relieve me. There was no question in my mind, when I tendered my resignation, that Richard Helms, my successor as Director of Central Intelligence, was eminently qualified for the post and the President agreed.

Q. When did you send your letter of resignation to the President?

A. Around June 1. The President gave me due notice of his acceptance, of his regret at my departure, and of his appreciation of my work. The President announced my resignation on June 13.

Q. Are you returning to Aerojet or some other executive position in big business?

A. I am returning to the Aerojet-General Corporation as a senior officer. I will be the company's general representative in Washington. 1

Q. Is it true that within the CIA there was criticism of your alleged lack of knowledge of foreign countries, of your alleged failure to really get deeply interested in the intelligence side of the Agency, but instead you worked on improving management methods?

A. I suppose there may have been a few people in the Agency who may have felt that way, but certainly the Agency continued to do its job effectively and efficiently. The importance of the Agency's work has a way of ensuring sufficient harmony to make sure that the job gets done. 1

Q. Were you frustrated and upset by Press and Congressional criticism of your work?

A. No. As President Truman once said, if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. The President was satisfied with my work and after all he is the CIA's principal customer. As a public official I expected criticism, some fair, some foul. It's part of official life.

Q. What have you done, in your own opinion, to better the CIA, what impact have you left as a result of your 14 months of leadership?

A. We initiated new management methods based upon long-range planning to meet the requirement of having the world's best intelligence service at reasonable cost. We developed new and improved machinery to insure that our government's top policy-making officers were kept advised, in a timely way, of significant international developments. These, I think, are the two primary accomplishments.

Q. Reviewing your duty in intelligence as the Director of Central Intelligence, as Director of CIA, as Chairman of USIB representing the President of the United States, as the President's principal advisor on foreign intelligence in the interest of national security, what one thing in all these jobs has given you the most satisfaction of having done well for our country?

A. It is of course a high honor and privilege to serve the President in any capacity. I got particular satisfaction from the association with some of the most capable, professional, and dedicated men and women I have ever known. The U.S. Government and the American people are well-served by those who work in the intelligence field.

Q. Did you have anything to do with the President's selection of Richard Helms, the Deputy, to succeed you as Director of Central Intelligence?

A. Yes. Mr. Helms has spent 20 years in the intelligence business. He is an intelligence "pro" in every sense of the word. He is well-known and highly regarded by the government's top executives. As the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, he acquired all the necessary experience to make it a certainty, in my mind, that he will be an effective and successful Director.

Q. What is your opinion of the competence of Mr. Helms as a professional intelligence officer and of the view he will be more successful in the intelligence community and with the Congress than you had been?

A. Mr Helms has a deep and keen knowledge of international affairs; he is fluent in French and in German, has lived and worked abroad as a student, intelligence officer and as a newspaper correspondent, attended schools in Switzerland and in Germany -- he's the tops in the field of foreign intelligence.